(b) whether any reference has been made to promote integrated rural development to bridge the rural-urban divide;

(c) whether the package included five components suggested by Dr. M.S. Swaminathan of National Commission on Farmers for Agricultural Renewal; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by Government for improving rural infrastructure and regulation of farm markets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Epidemiological study on bird flu

3658. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:
SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: PROF.
ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any epidemiological study and surveillance has been undertaken by Government to find out whether the outbreak of bird flu was triggered by the migratory birds;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is possibility of the virus striking during the winter seasons again; and

(d) if so, what preventive measures Government propose to take in this respect?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASUMUDDIN): (a) and (b) A committee has been constituted by Government of India by order dated 22nd February, 2006 to determine the possible source of infection of the outbreak of Avian Influenza in poultry in Namlurbar District of Maharashtra under the Chairmanship of Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MOHFW).

Samples of wild/migratory birds were also taken from the area surrounding Navapur. Till date, no sample of wild/migratory birds has tested positive for avian influenza.

(c) It is not possible to predict whether the virus will strike India again during the winter season. It is dependent on several factors including persistence of virus in local poultry/birds and transmission of disease if any, from migratory birds. The present wave of Avian Influenza commenced in Hong Kong in 1997 but the first outbreak was reported in India in February 2006 only.

(d) Preventive measures are in place to prevent outbreak of Avian Influenza and to control/contain it in case of outbreak. The pre-outbreak measures include ban on poultry/poultry products from HPAI infected countries, intensified surveillance, alerting of Quarantine Stations, circulation of Action Plan and Advisories to States, formation of Joint Monitoring mechanisms with stakeholders such as Health, Environment & Forests etc., developing the centra! strategic reserve of vaccine and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), providing training to officials of Health, Animal Husbandry and Forests **ect.**

Assistance to Madhya Pradesh for fishery, animal husbandry and poultry farming

†3659. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the economic condition of farmers having small land holdings is pitiable;

(b) whether Government are providing economic aid/grant to the farmers for fishery, animal husbandry and poultry farming, etc.; and

(c) if so, the details thereof, particularly in the context of Madhya Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) The economic condition of small and marginal farmers leaves lot to be desired.

(b) and (c) The schemes implemented by the Department of Animal

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.